



BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER THE STORM

Hurricane Categories

Hurricanes are rated on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale from Category 1 to Category 5, based on their sustained wind speed. The scale estimates potential property damage. Hurricanes of Category 3 or higher are considered major because of their potential for significant loss of life and damage. Category 1 and 2 are still dangerous and require preventive measures.

SCALE CATEGORY	SUSTAINED WINDS (MPH)	DAMAGE
1	74 - 95	Some damage: unanchored mobile homes, vegetation and signs.
2	96 - 110	Extensive: all mobile homes, roofs, small crafts, flooding.
3	111 - 129	Devastating: small buildings, low-lying roads cut off.
4	130 - 156	Catastrophic: roofs destroyed, trees down, roads cut off, mobile homes destroyed, beach homes flooded.
5	157 - plus	Catastrophic: most buildings destroyed, vegetation destroyed, major roads cut off, homes flooded.



Storm Surge

Storm surge is an abnormal rise of sea water generated by a storm. It moves ashore prior to and during a hurricane making landfall. Water rising along the coastal areas and rivers can inundate populated areas as the storm makes landfall. Damage severity depends upon the storm's size, forward speed, direction of movement, tidal action and intensity. Storm surge has the potential to cause the greatest loss of life, cripple communications, cause sewers and stormwater basins to back up, and contaminate drinking water supplies. It can leave roads, streets and bridges filled with sand, debris and, in some cases, structurally unstable.

COUNTY SAFETY STATUS: Red, yellow and green conditions

Hurricanes, tornados and other natural disasters can create widespread damage, leaving debris, downed trees, flooding, live power lines on the ground, and damaged buildings. Immediately following such disaster, many departments (including law enforcement, fire, emergency management and public works) respond to assess damage and help citizens.

Communicating the level of damage and potential danger is imperative. The safety of our community is our No. 1 concern. **Sarasota County utilizes a color-coded system (RED, YELLOW, GREEN)** to indicate the level of damage, hazards and impact to services.


COLOR	LEVEL OF DANGER	CITIZEN ACTION
RED	Unsafe. Emergency services may not be available. Extensive damage limiting travel.	Access may not be allowed, or limited, according to authorities having jurisdiction. Travel in this area is unsafe and not recommended.
YELLOW	Limiting factors to include lack of power, trees and power lines down in areas. Traffic lights may be out. Potential damage to utilities such as water systems and wastewater.	Safety precautions required. General travel limited to essential needs.
GREEN	No limiting factors.	


These colors will be used in Sarasota County's emergency public communications to represent the safety status of the county. Heavily impacted areas where damage is extensive and services are limited will require the **RED** status. As in Hurricane Ian, impacts to power, traffic lights, and downed trees may require larger areas of **YELLOW**; meaning take caution, be vigilant and careful when out on the roads. Finally, as power is restored, roads cleared, and traffic lights become operable, the level of danger will return to **GREEN**.



1660 Ringling Blvd.
Sarasota, FL 34236

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www.scgov.net

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